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SUBJECT: Malawi Government Calls for Release of Zimbabwe Election Results

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a statement released on April 19, the GOM called on the Zimbabwe Government to release the election results so that "a Government can be formed that will steer the country to the future." Reiterating the SADC principle of "non-interference," the GOM expressed concern over the economic and political issues facing the people of Zimbabwe. Adding that it believes Zimbabweans "should not live in the past," the GOM called for new negotiations "to reconcile differences," including a resumption of the Zimbabwe-UK talks that followed the Lancaster House Agreement. Regarding Zimbabwean discussions with the UK Government, the GOM stated, "even when a new Government is constituted, dialogue between Britain and Zimbabwe will still be necessary." Prior to this statement, Malawi had not strayed from the SADC line. It appears that the GOM has begun to soften that stance and may be opening up to the possibility of Mugabe's fall. End summary.

Malawi Calls for Release of Election Results

¶2. (SBU) In a statement released on April 19, the GOM stated it is "ready to work with any Government that will emerge in Zimbabwe, based on the will of the people as expressed through the general elections." The statement adds that "it is important that the results of the general elections that took place recently need to be published so that a Government can be formed that will steer the country to the future."

¶3. (SBU) Noting the SADC principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, the GOM went on to commend the work of South African President Mbeki in "bringing the ZANU-PF and the MDC to the negotiating table that led to the holding of the recent General Elections."

Zimbabwe Should Not Live in the Past - Call for New Negotiations

¶4. (SBU) The GOM stated its belief that Zimbabweans "should not live in the past. They must move on." The statement added, "therefore, we believe that a new set of negotiations could be initiated at different levels ... to air their views, to listen to one another and to reconcile their differences."

¶5. (SBU) Specifically, the GOM called for the resumption of the negotiations between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom "that took place following the Lancaster House Agreement." The GOM claims that the breakdown of those talks contributed to the current situation, and it called for a "new atmosphere of understanding and mutual trust between the two governments as the basis for solving the Zimbabwe crisis." The statement added that "even when a new Government is constituted, dialogue between Britain and Zimbabwe will still be necessary."

¶6. (SBU) The GOM called for new negotiations between the GOZ and white farmers "to deal with the issue of land resettlement." Malawi also called for the strengthening of the dialogue between the

Government of Zimbabwe and the MDC "to look at the underlying political crisis and to remove the current deadlock. The release of all the results of the recent elections is the necessary condition for such dialogue."

Comment

¶7. (SBU) The GOM has not strayed far from the SADC line on Zimbabwe - until now. By calling for the release of election results, terming the situation a "crisis," and appearing to lay the groundwork for reconciliation through ongoing and broad-based negotiations, the GOM is taking a welcome step out of SADC's shadow, perhaps even opening to the possibility of a new government in Zimbabwe. Our GOM contacts are spinning this statement as reflecting a great deal of nuance and a new attitude on their part.

¶8. (U) The complete text of the GOM press statement has been transmitted to AF/S desk officer.

EASTHAM